

INDEXA

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Conway Reef DXpedition—1995

by Garry Shapiro, NI6T

The Conway Reef team assembled in Suva, Fiji. Pekka, OH1RY, and Taina, his girlfriend, arrived last—they were delayed for a day in Sydney by a cancelled flight. We departed in the 20-meter ketch, *Te Ni*, at sundown on Tuesday, March 21 (Fiji time). Most of us were seasick during the two and a half day trip to the reef, 300 miles to the southwest.

We anchored off Conway Reef on Friday morning, the 24th. Despite ominous sea conditions, Mats, SM7PKK, and Pekka, OH1RY, set off in a small dinghy, fitted with a 15 hp outboard. They successfully negotiated the reef, landing on the small coral islet. Transfer operations commenced, bringing water, antennas, Pekka, and Jun (JH4RHF) ashore. On the next run a large wave capsized the dinghy, spilling Mats, Taina, and a boatload of equipment into the sea. Injuries were narrowly averted and a significant amount of equipment was lost, including the outboard motor and most of Pekka's radio and personal gear. It was a devastating occurrence.

Nonetheless, operations resumed later with the captain's 2.5 hp outboard pressed into service. With Pekka running the dinghy, I climbed in for the last trip of the day. We never made it. A huge wave overtook us and again capsized the boat. I lost most of my personal gear—and all the DXpedition



The Conway Reef DXpedition Team: (l-r, top) OH1RY, SM7PKK, SM6CAS; and (l-r, bottom) NI6T, JH4RHF

flags—but no radio gear was lost. Pekka and I swam back to the *Te Ni*.

That night was the low point of the trip; we seriously considered aborting the DXpedition. Mats, Jun, and Taina spent a cold, hungry night ashore while Nils, SM6CAS; Pekka; and I were aboard the *Te Ni*. The next morning we watched the sea for any sign of calming. Despite the apparent loss of one operating station (we lost a crucial power supply) and the possible loss of another (a drenched power supply was rinsed and dried), we still thought we could make a go of it. Operations resumed with smaller boatloads and lower centers of gravity. The DXpedition began to take shape on the island.

QRV

3D2CU fired up on 20M SSB and Conway Reef was at least partially QRV. With Nils and I finally ashore, the whole team was re-united. Pekka and Nils alternated on SSB while the rest of us scurried to put on the CW station, 3D2CT, while establishing the logistics base: generators, fuel, water, and food. The original plan called for widely separated SSB and CW positions with an RTTY/auxiliary station near the CW station. Instead the two stations were close, separated by a common eating area between the operating tents.

Equipment

Our antennas were verticals from 160 through 30M and beams from 20 to 10M. Except for Pekka's remarkable 160/80 vertical, all antennas were Force 12 DXpedition models.

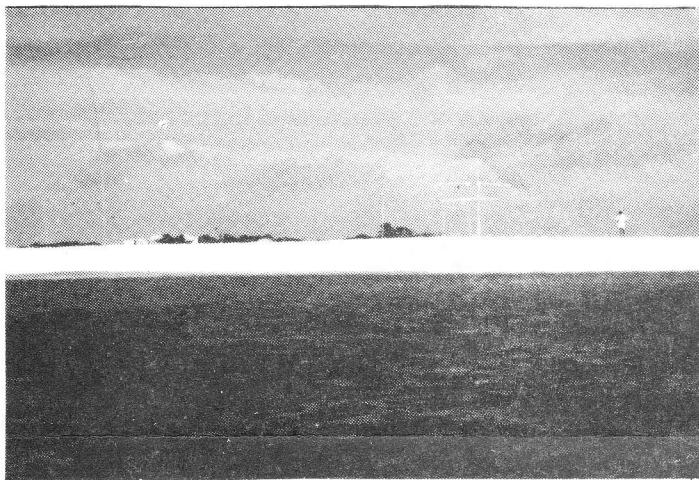
The amplifiers, two TL922A's and an Alpha 91B prototype, had been brought ashore. One Kenwood went to the SSB position and put out about 400W. The other could not be induced to load. The Alpha, assigned to CW, initially put out a steady 500W but attempts to draw more tripped the protective circuitry. The length and size of the power cables were blamed but, over the next few days, the amp exhibited a growing reluctance to go into transmit mode and finally quit altogether. *...continued on next page*

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Conway Reef

Propagation and QSOs

The propagation gods smiled upon us. An SFI of 95 with a K of 0 greeted our initial efforts and we made many QSOs with Europe. Signals were consistently strong to JA and North America. Later in the week, QRN increased on the low bands but conditions remained generally good. This, combined with the effectiveness of good antennas in a salt water environment, enabled us, despite initial setbacks, to log almost 30,000 QSOs. Our good fortune was underlined by the collapse of conditions immediately following our departure when the A index soared to 49!

With only two stations, our ability to service all band and mode constituencies was severely impaired, especially those such as 160M and RTTY whose QSO rates cannot equal those of the "money" bands and modes. Nevertheless, we were able to log a fair number of QSOs on these as well. Our plan to use computer logging was also abandoned so we used paper logs for all QSOs except RTTY, of course.

Living Conditions and Departure

From the time we left Suva until our return we essentially lived on instant noodles and canned fruit, adding other canned and packaged ingredients to the noodles for variety. Fish was an occasional treat provided by Pekka, Taina, and me. There was also plenty of Coke and beer (usually warm). The weather was generally hot but benign except for

one raging midnight squall which almost tore the camp apart. It blew over and damaged the 17/12M beam. The waters surrounding the island were as clear as gin, offering wonderful snorkeling, which few had the opportunity to enjoy.

We were not alone, either. The Fiji navy showed

up—a surprise to both groups—but unlike the experience of the last Clipper-
ton team, they carried no weapons and were friendly and curious. Conway, *Ceva i Ra*, establishes the southern boundary of Fiji and is regularly patrolled and occupied to maintain Fijian sovereignty. The sailors mostly gathered shellfish from the reef (I had my first taste of giant clam) and departed.

We broke camp and departed on Monday, April 3, arriving in Suva three days later. Early estimates indicate 30,000 QSOs in the log, 10-15% with Europe. Following a week of unloading, storing, shipping, and meeting and relaxing with local hams, we went our separate ways. The challenge of Conway Reef was behind us.

New Life Members.....

K5VT, AA7UC, BV7WB, CT1KT, K6SPQ, AB6LJ, N9JCL, KJ5KQ, KB9GNP, WA6OWM, and WS4F

Extra Help Provided By.....

K5VT, K8CH, W0JRN, N0ZA, KB7ZTV, ZP6CC, KZ0X, CT1KT, WDX2TAU, W6EEN, KH6CF, KF8N, W6KUS, W1WRN, W6NIZ, W5KFN, WA9JNO, N3CWP, KD0JL, WB9WHQ, DL1GST, JM1CMA, AH6JF, W3DR, ZP5MAL, NI6P, WS7W, KA3VIY, AE2N, WA6WXD, N0ALH, N4UCJ, W1BAL, AA7KG, KG5IT, AA7WF, DL1EMO, AC6LT, K1SRR, AC6DQ, W9NUB, WT4U, JH4JZB, JA8GTO, WA6GFE, and 7L1MFS.

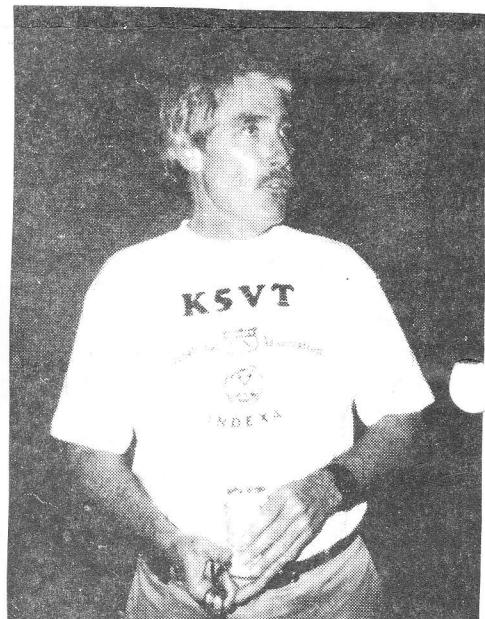
Vince, K5VT

Vince, K5VT, along with WA3YVN and WA4VQD, put South Georgia Island on the air in January, 1995.

Vince flew into INDEXA territory to present a forum about the DXpedition at the Charlotte hamfest.

His slides were great and he even flashed one on the screen that he described as the INDEXA Board of Directors.

Many of us still think it looked like a group of penguins. Really!



Staff Member Profile—AA7UC

Judy, AA7UC, came of age during the 1960's. She attended Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, CA, before entering campus life at the University of California, Riverside. During her years of parochial education she was a music student, studying harpsichord, organ, and classical guitar. From UCR she earned a B.A. degree in English and pursued further study in the field of Psychology.

There were many interesting opportunities during the early years but she was most fascinated with public radio. Judy received a broadcaster's license and worked as a disc jockey and newscaster at the university radio station. She soon realized that radio provided a unique opportunity for the communication of ideas, values, and positive directions in life. Ideas can be dangerous and divisive or they can be an avenue for growth and understanding. The concepts of growth and understanding became, for her, an important tool for fostering mutual understanding, goodwill, and respect. Radio assumed an importance in her life; however, earning a living, supporting her husband's career, and responsibility to her community placed these interests on hold.

During the 1990's, many of life's pressures eased. Her husband, Ken, N7SQU, accepted a position as Professor of Psychology, Philosophy, and Religion at a community college in the mountains of northeastern AZ. Judy turned to amateur radio, receiving her Extra Class license in February, 1993. She became a member of the ARRL and the Amateur Radio News Service before her interests quickly turned to DX and INDEXA. She found INDEXA's interests to be her interests because for her, the values of promoting international goodwill, understanding, and fellowship are the best of the amateur world.



Bad Hair Day!

Copy Editor

Good things come to those who wait. At INDEXA headquarters, we waited. We needed a copy editor and along came Judy who volunteered her services. The copy editor is responsible to the editor who provides material for proofreading and layout.

The revised format gives us a "new" look for our newsletter. The quality of information presented in previous newsletters will be meticulously maintained.

We welcome Judy as a staff member of INDEXA. Her services will free up more time for headquarters to plan support for future DXpeditions.

North Korea...on the air!

Mark, OH2BH; OH2BC; and OH0XX recently visited North Korea on business. During their stay, the ruling family of the DPRK granted permission for a limited amateur radio operation.

On 14 May 1995 the amateurs operated with the call, P5/OH2AM. Due to limited time, they made approximately 20 contacts. The operators left four Yaesu HF/VHF stations for training and more amateur activity later this year. Stay tuned, folks!

Mug Shot

Our Vice-President, Gary, K4MQG, wanted a photo of the operating officers and directors who attend the Charlotte, N.C. hamfest. It took four years to make the arrangements. Then, Murphy's Law took over. (Not me, the other Murphy!) Our Chairman, John, W4FRU, became ill and couldn't attend. The photo was taken anyway and you can see the results. Have fun, folks!



Support INDEXA!

(L-r) W4UNP, Sec./Treas.; W4WMQ, Pres.; W4MPY, Dir.; K8CH, Dir.; K4MQG, V. Pres.

INDEXA Ballot 1995-1996

Office	Nominee	Yes	No	Write-in
President	W4WMQ			
Vice-President	K4MQG			
Secretary-Treasurer	W4UNP			
Directors	1 Year			
	ZL1AMO			
	DJ9ZB			
Directors	3 Year			
	W4FRU			
	LA8CJ			
	W4MPY			

New Logo—FREE!

In the process of changing the type font on our logo, we purchased a limited number of peel and stick logos for all members. They're made of vinyl and suitable for use, inside or out. We will continue to make changes and improvements in the future. In the meantime, have fun with your complimentary logo!

Please vote for the nominees as approved by the Directors or use the write-in space if desired.

Please mail your ballot to the election officer:

Bill Jennings, W4UNP • 630 Whitepine Drive • Catawba, SC 29704



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